June 2000. Sandhill cranes are very rare transients in North Carolina and are typically found irregularly from late July to May (Potter *et al.* 1980).

B Aquatic Communities. Aquatic habitats within the project study area range from ephemeral waters present in intermittent, channelized first order streams to permanent, riverine habitat within the channels of South River, Little Coharie Creek, and Six Runs Creek. These three wetland systems have intact floodplains; however, these floodplains are at higher elevations and typically do not exhibit prolonged inundation. Inundated or flooded conditions do occur in several of the larger named wetland systems including Carltons Mill Branch and Buckhall Creek as a result of beaver activity and definable stream channel are either very fragmented or non-existent. Numerous other smaller unnamed systems also exhibit conditions consistent with beaver impacts and often do not have a defined channel. Other large wetland systems such as Big Swamp and Great Coharie Creek appear to naturally have seasonal and long-lasting inundation due primarily to the presence of wide and flat floodplains. Additional aquatic habitats include ponds and borrow pits with varying temporal hydrology as well as ephemeral pools.

The diversity of streams crossing the project corridors provides habitat for a variety of aquatic species. Large streams and rivers with good water quality and a diversity of aquatic habitats, such as South River, Little Coharie Creek, Great Coharie Creek, Six Runs Creek, and Buckhall Creek are expected to support a more diverse assemblage of fish and other aquatic organisms than smaller tributaries.

Limited sampling with seines, dip nets and electro-shocking documented a number of fish species inhabiting project study area streams. Sampling efforts were focused on perennial stream crossings including South River, Six Runs Creek, Buckhall Creek, Bearskin Swamp, Little Coharie Creek, and Moccasin Branch. Eastern mosquitofish (*Gambusia holbrooki*) and blue-spotted sunfish (*Enneacanthus gloriosus*) were common in most of the perennial streams within the project study area. Fish documented in larger streams and floodplain backwaters include species commonly found in the region, including yellow bullhead (*Ameiurus natalis*), eastern mudminnow (*Umbra pygmaea*), pirate perch (*Aphredoderus sayanus*), bluegill (*Lepomis macrochirus*), warmouth (*Lepomis gulosus*) and sawcheek darter (*Etheostoma serrifer*).

The prevalence of woody debris and lack of flow within most of the project study area perennial stream channels limited the efficacy of using a seine for documenting larger and more mobile fish species. The sampling techniques utilized in this preliminary study were also of limited value in documenting the aquatic fauna of larger and deeper sections of the project study area streams such as the South River and Little Coharie Creek. Fish (1968) indicates that the larger streams within the project study area would be expected to support populations of game fish such as chain and redfin pickerel (*Esox niger* and *E. americanus*), largemouth bass (*Micropterus salmoides*) and several sunfish species including red breast sunfish (*Lepomis auritus*), redear sunfish (*Lepomis microlophus*), and pumpkinseed (*Lepomis gibbosus*), as well as bluegill and